ON THE ROAD TO SAN ROMANO

Poetry is made in a bed like love
Its rumpled sheets are the dawn of things
Poetry is made in the woods

It has the space it needs
Not this one but the other governed by
The red gunnard's eye
Dew on a horse-tail
The memory of a clouded bottle of Traminer on a silver tray
A high column of tourmaline over the sea
And the road of mental adventure
Rising steeply
One halt and its immediately overgrown

This isn't for shouting over the rooftops
It's wrong to leave the door open
Or to call for witnesses

Banks of fish nests of tomtits
The rails at the approach to a mainline station
The reflections of two riverbanks
The ridges on a loaf of bread
Foam bubbles in a stream
The days of the calendar
Aaron's beard

The act of love and the act of poetry
Are incompatible
With the reading aloud of newspapers

The direction of the sunbeam
The blue gleam that links the axe-strokes of a woodsman
The string of the heart-shaped snare-shaped kite
The rhythmic beat of beavers' tails
The diligence of lightning
The throwing of sugar almonds from the top of old staircases
The avalanche

The room of miracles lies
No gentlemen it's not the Eighth Room
Nor the haziness of barrack-rooms on Sunday nights

The dance figures performed in transparency over ponds
The shape of a woman's body traced by daggers cast on a wall
The clear whorlings of smoke
The curls of your hair
The curve of Philippino sponge
The writhings of the coral serpent
The encroachment of ivy on ruins
All time lies before it

The poetic embrace like the sexual embrace
While it lasts
Forbids all surveyance of the world's misery

—André BRETON

THE SUPPOSED BEING

Supposing the mouth
The hard lips crowned with bright flowers
A bursting foam of petals
And each gold stamen an anxious arrow
As each firm finger a signal
Pointing to fire and water's junction
Whose furious fumes would stifle the passers-by
With their startled eyes
With their nervous hands and faces
Whose language is black whose language has
Never been ours.

Supposing the eyes
Luscious in lashes and deep stained with sleep
The eyes in the forehead like pools in the rocks
And the turbulent sea approaching
Shivering ravenous venomous-scarred
By the sharp-taloned claws of its waves
As eyes by their ravaging lids
As their lids by the richly veined hands
That are burnt by the light of the sun
And the stones are on fire
And the pupils of eyes are glazed by
Heat of their flames.

Supposing the hands
With their nails and their delicate bones
Like the frail limbs of birds
And their tips like the pink tips of buds
That probe the cold curious air
And discover the blood neath the skin
And the surface of stones.

Supposing the breasts
Like shells on the oceanless shore
At the end of the world
Like furious thrusts of a single knife
Like bread to be broken by hands
Supposing the breasts still untouched by desires
Still unsuckled by thirsts
And motionless still
Breasts violently still and enisled in the
Night and afraid both of love and of death.

Supposing the sex
A crudity and dead in the thighs
A gaping and blackness--a charred
Trace of feverish flames

The sex like an X
As the sign and the imprint of all that has gone before
As a torch
To enlighten the forest of gloom and the
Mountains of unattained night.

And supposing the being entire
The tangible body standing
The visible limbs existing
And moving across the daylight
Or motionless in the darkness
A stone on the torrent's bed
Or a torrent above the stones --
And at last

Such a being escapes from the sight of my visible eyes
From the touch of my tangible hand
For she only exists
Where all contradictions exist
Where darkness is light and the real is unreal and the
World is a dream in a dream.

David GASCOYNE

(b. 1912--

author of Man's Life Is This Meat, Holderlin's Madness, Collected Poems, (Oxford University Press, 1965.)

PENELOPE ROSEMONT :

Athanor

This morning
I brought you the sun
in a sack

I rose from my bed very early
I put on a brown dress
of pheasant feathers
a cloak made of chameleon skins
and on my head I set the nest
of a robin

I sped to the edge of the sea
on the back of a snow leopard
who chilled the air as he passed
causing hoarfrost on weeds and trees

At the sea's edge
while the horizon was invisible
I concealed myself (with the help
of my chameleon cloak)
among lavender clouds
and silver rocks

Just as the still drowsy sun
came from behind the sea
I seized it with tongs of liquid mercury
and cast it into a sack
lined with brimstone
and nettles

I will bring it to you
for your breakfast
to spread on your bread like butter
and drink like honeysuckle nectar
and rub on your body
so that you will become luminous
dazzle your enemies
and become master
of all the beasts

GRAPE

A circle of centipedes
races around
the steamship
The ocean
which folds
like an accordion
can be tucked
behind
your
ear

JOSEPH JABLONSKI

The Savage

The Savage is putting on formal dress. He has received an invitation to dine this evening at the home of Madame Image. . .

He looks in the full dress mirror to see the fire and the heart of the forest. . .

You are cordially invited
to dinner on the evening of May 5th
(RSVP)

The Savage replies. Seated at his writing desk he launches the bat terriers into the midnight wells and orange newspaper declivities. He lifts the gunnery captain from the obscurity of the suicide rolls. He threads the insoluble blond python through the knee of the wreckers, baying all the time and striking his left foot against the chamber pot so as to weaken the timbers that support the ancient trustees pensioned to purgatory. He launches the wolf terriers across the white lips of the moon to bring snow to eyes and end the hunger of the planet.

Rising from the writing table, he splices the arteries of his exposed heart to the veins of the dresser mirror and watches the crystal cloud with purple blood. He clasps a harpoon in either hand and plunges into the raging flood of the street, which bears him onwards in the closing light toward his destination.

Grovenour, the butcher-butler, shows our Savage into the dining room, where the Feast of Fiends has already begun. Our Savage takes his seat and is promptly bound fast with steel wires, so tightly that he can barely move his fingers because of the constriction of muscles and blood vessels. His eyes dart forth into the fantastic array spread out on the table before him. It is a forest containing the evil planets of the night as well as the violent sins of afternoon, lit by amoebic suns reflected in the eyes of frozen wolves and sea-lions.

Consider the gamut of the feast, O Savage. Review the contents of each plate, O aboriginal wonder-child. Madame Image has further plans concerning you. . .

Write

1.

It is a simple act. You are not at home; you have no home. Falling off a cliff you have plenty of time till King Kong catches you in his paw and sets you down. And your own writing hand moves in a gentle way to the rhythm of chemical compounds spelling out words, words that existed before number. You think that number is feeling, only feeling, and you set aside the temptation to count.

Reach from within this mind that is everywhere, and in everything. You find that you are reaching into the everywhere, that the borders reflect themselves.

2.

Shadows, blocking. King Kong roaming through the empty auditorium, ends up throwing chairs. The mixologist, speaking in tongues, opens a trade in the signatures of suicides.

Ten lepers, dressed as gangsters, come and torture him.

They are seeking information about the missing blue-prints of the astral dairy farms.

Spiders enter lengthwise and rape the cut-glass designs.

Shadows, blocking.

3.

I see a lunar landscape on your skirt that raises like a window shade.

I see your face that tilts like a Venetian blind.

I hand you my knife, just sharpened.

I hand it to you for I am about to tell you my thoughts.

Write.

4.

I see your face, a red glowing shade of tissue paper.
My knife has turned to water,
unable to cut our bleeding lips apart.

5.

The elevator bearing us
ascends faster and faster,
higher and higher
than the pigeon's brain.

SEEING AND NOT SEEING

I would be an alien
I want to get out of this century
It's as blind as a lunar eclipse
diabolical as an empty glove
that plays the cards of desolation
while a spectre is whispering in my ear
the cruel secrets of sight
I'll fill my hands with birds
and conjure the lavish sea
under the eye of a Mediterranean boat
which peers back on the proud
sails of women, long vanished
I'll stand at the exit
of the terrible sign of reason
pry open the Father's eyelids
and summon the rumored kingdom of scales
where the Pythagorean opulence of reptiles
flings the murderous horde back to the quaternary
where in a strategic fire-storm
Hegel will meet Morgan le Fee
so it will begin again, and
eloquent as the lips of a jackknife
the winds will continue divulging
riches of a mad prescience

SPHINX BOMB

While pyramids dine on edible sands
lethal elements slip along the fuse
hydrogen holds a candle to the black eye of the storm
which disappears as quickly as it came

The world's blood is flowing away
The world's hair is on fire
There's nothing new in this look of perdition
How cleverly we've contrived the rendezvous
How invisibly the archaeologists
have siphoned the ruins
How easily we've forgotten the stars

Sirius barks at the moon
Helium balloons meet up with a regiment of thumbscrews
Radioactive liquors inundate the hemispheres
according to their proper destiny
Spontaneous combustion of our sleepless nights
will wake up the hibernating mummies
who jump to a pharoanic conclusion
so that justice can pounce between the legs
of this world
to cut the throat of war
blowing from the brains of dogs
and with perfect logic
murder will no longer commit itself

Let the obelisques smile at the square root of five
and the distance between the fall and the leap
multiply beyond recognition

CABOTAGE IN THE SWEET BRUISE OF NIGHT

You were always a swimmer in my dream
moving close to my dark shores
while fans opened themselves
like invading armies
assaulting the cryptic tides

You were always a shadow on a reef
your silhouette of cold light
trembling and violent as it stood
listening to things being
born in the rift

You were always my horse of breakers
the one who escaped and left behind
a trident and an unfinished story
Spanish gypsies remember you
caballo de espuma
submerged like a green dawn
subversive as the fog
I'll ride you away through the waves
to light fires in the fierce
latitudes of pleasure

—NANCY JOYCE PETERS